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Weekly Situation Report on International Terrorism

DO WSRIT 79-025

5 July 1979

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Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

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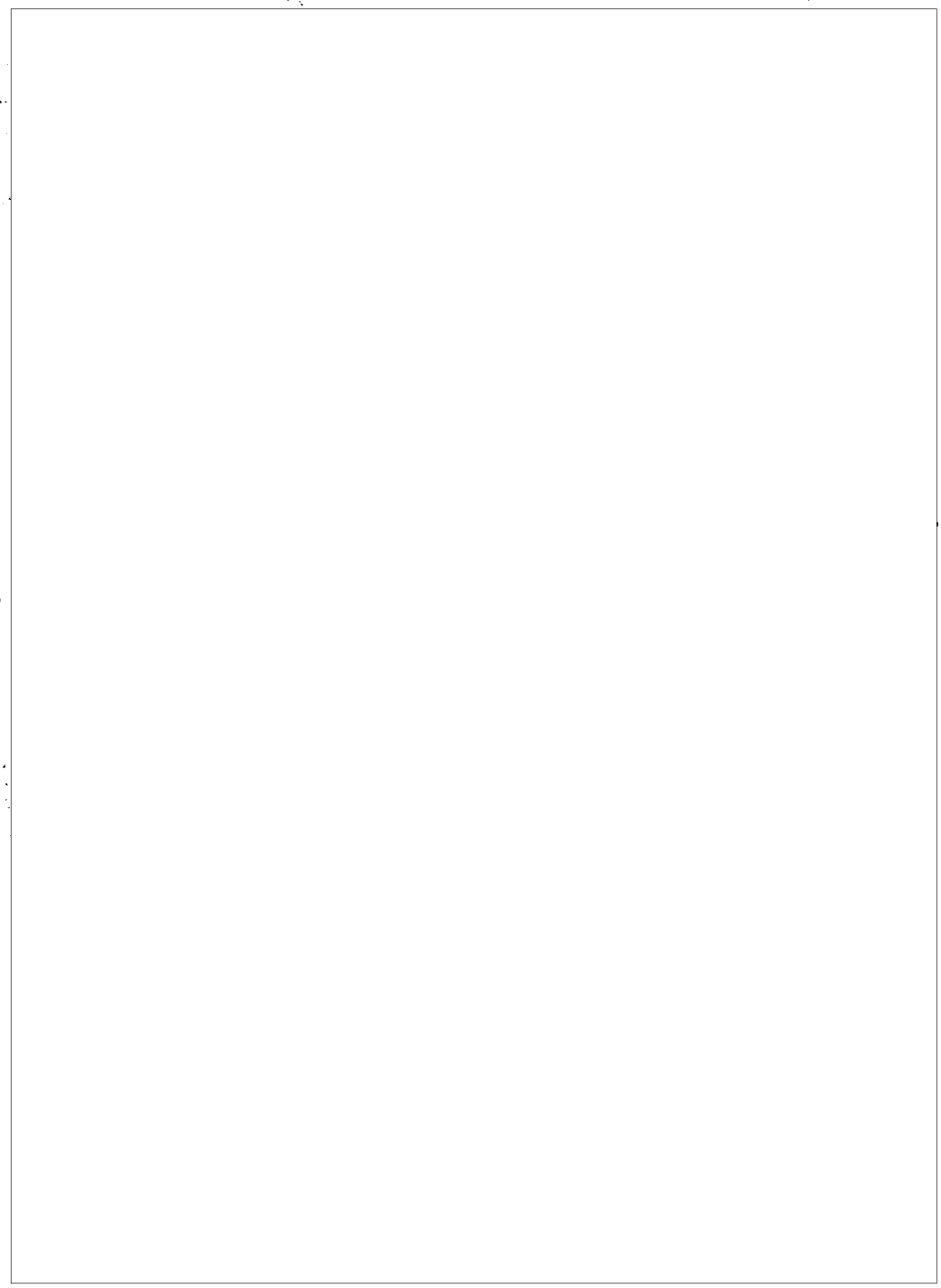

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Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

(b)(3)

WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

CONTENTS

NR

5 July 1979

Niehous Freed After Three Years of Captivity (Page 5)

NR

(b)(3)

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

NR

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

NR

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

NR

NR

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

5 July 1979

Niehous Freed After Three Years of Captivity

American businessman William F. Niehous, kidnaped by leftist terrorists on 27 February 1976, was found alive in the Venezuelan jungles on 30 June 1979. The man was rescued after a gun battle on 29 June between a police patrol and his guerrilla captors on a secluded ranch south of the Orinoco River, about 350 miles southeast of Caracas. (b)(3)

two mounted policemen looking for cattle rustlers came across a shack in a jungle clearing in central Venezuela. As they approached the hut, two men came out shooting. The agents killed both men and then found Niehous. The agents, fearing more guerrillas might be nearby, took Niehous and immediately moved out of the area. Niehous was later turned over to ranking Venezuelan officials who expedited his departure for the U.S. (b)(3) (b)(3)

Niehous later told the press that from the first day of the kidnaping until the last, he was told that he would never be killed. He said the kidnapers always told him that they were not assassins. He also said he was allowed to speak his mind during the entire period, defending his beliefs on any subject. He said he was never threatened or mistreated, other than being kept a captive. By Niehous' own calculations he had been held in the hut for about 15 months, living on canned foods, roast meat, and fruit. During his three-year captivity he had been moved around the countryside about a dozen times. (b)(3)

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

NR

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

NR

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

NR

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

NR

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

NR

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

NR

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

NR

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

NR

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

NR

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

NR

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

NR

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

Approved for Release: 2017/11/07 C06706440

NR

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